

A Crested Form of the Lady Fern

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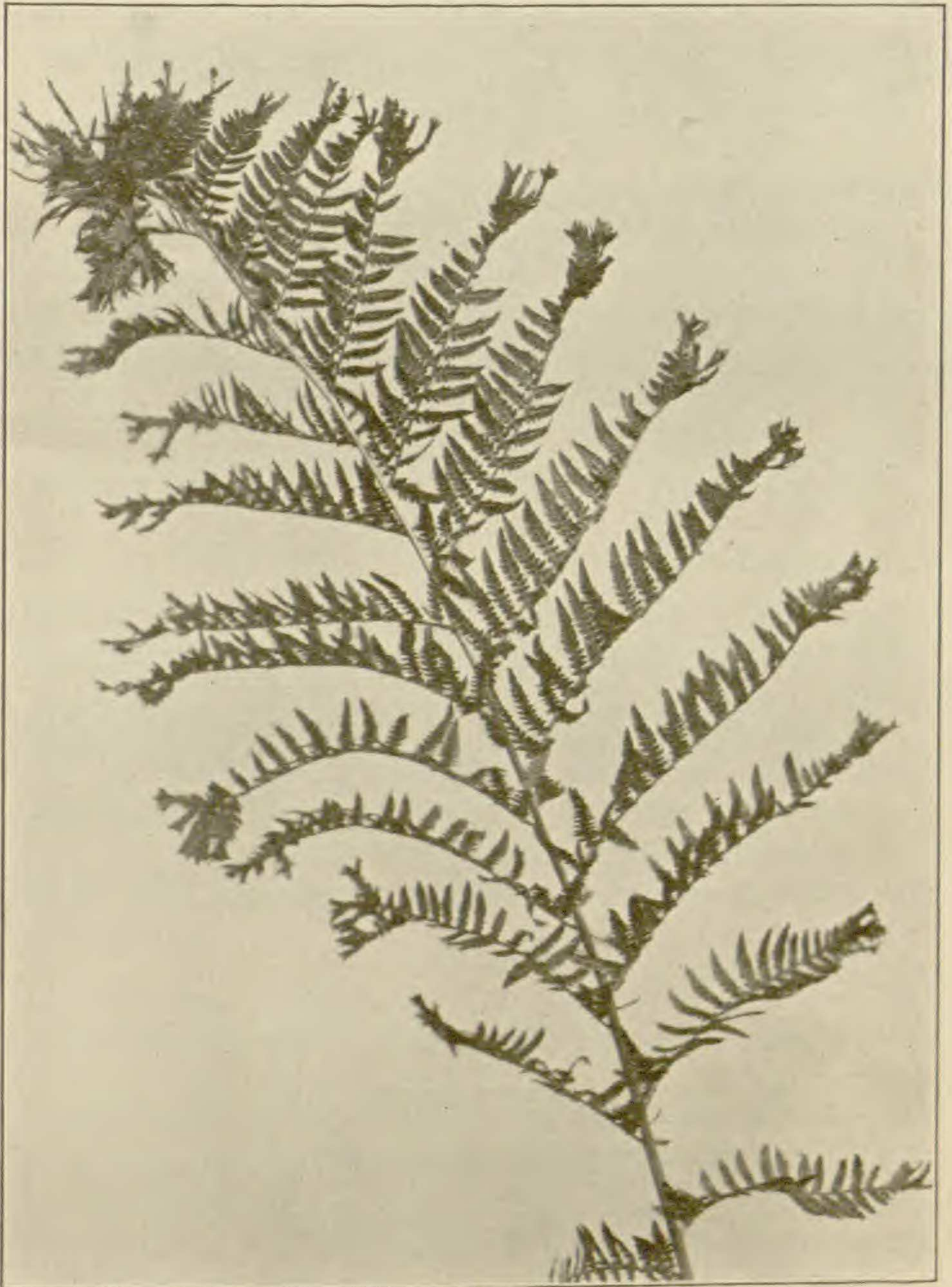
In the summer of 1916, while on a field trip near Windham, Portage County, this state, I found a crested form of the Lady Fern. The form was new to me and sufficiently beautiful to make a rather striking appearance. I lifted the plant and brought it home. It was first given a place with several other ferns in a small bit of native woods on the college campus.

Although assurance had been given that the ferns were in no danger and would not be disturbed during the construction of a new dormitory nearby, the workmen buried the entire bed under logs, scrap lumber, and rubbish to the depth of some six or eight feet before their plight was discovered. After half a day of very strenuous labor on my part, which was a source of considerable amusement to those who had been guilty of the carelessness, the roots of perhaps half of the ferns, all of which were the very rarest species known to the state, were recovered and transferred to a hastily prepared fern-bed by the side of the house in which I am now living.

The crested Lady Fern was one of those which was rescued. It took kindly to its new home and has become more cristate each year until it is now a plant of real beauty.

Dr. Butters¹ has shown that there are two species of Lady Ferns instead of one in the eastern half of the United States, neither of which is identical with *Athyrium filix-foemina* (L.) Roth, of Europe. He concludes further that *Athyrium asplenoides* (Michx.) Desv. is prevailingy southern in its distribution, while *Athyrium angustum* (Willd.) Presl is prevailingy northern in its distribution.

¹ Contributions from the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University. Butters, F. K. *Rhodora* 19: 189-207, pl. 123. Sept., 1917.



ATHYRIUM ANGUSTUM, VAR. CRISTATUM HOPKINS

I am not aware to what extent, if any, crested forms of the Lady Fern are represented in the various herbaria and fern gardens. However, in the light of Dr. Butters' conclusion, it is improbable that this particular form has ever been given its proper name. I therefore wish to suggest that it be called

ATHYRIUM ANGUSTUM var. **cristatum** var. nov.

It is at once readily distinguished from the type and all other varieties by the crested pinnae and apex. The numerous (2 to 10) subdivisions of the pinnae are often again crested, giving the pinnae a plume-like appearance. The apex of many fronds bears such numerous crests that they are almost rosette-like in appearance. All of this is lost however in preparing specimens for the herbarium.

Fruiting fronds have been produced freely but the spores have not been tested to determine their fertility.

If by chance this form has been properly named elsewhere, the present notes will at least serve to call attention to what is likely to become known as the most beautiful form of this popular species.

Quite a number of herbarium specimens have been prepared and will be given to those who care to send postage.

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Commercial Fern Gathering

STEWART H. BURNHAM

Mr. Frank B. Tucker has published in *American Forestry*¹ an article on "Gathering the Spinulose Shield Fern," the picking of the fronds of which paid for his

¹ *Am. Forestry* 25: 1226-2128, illus. July, 1919.